THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

of

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

presents

EXPLORATIONS

Sunday, October 19, 1975 at 8:00 p.m.

Convocation Hall, Arts Building

ROMANCERO GITANO, OPUS 152 ..... Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968)

Baladilla de los tres rios
La Guitarra
Punal
Procesion
Memento
Baile
Crótalo

The University of Alberta Madrigal Singers
Conductor: Larry Cook
Soloists: Anita Noel, Soprano
Avaleigh Crokett, Alto
David Speers, Tenor
Don James, Baritone
Peter Higham, Guitar

SUITE FOR VIOLA AND PIANO ..... Ernest Bloch (1880-1959)

Lento-Allegro-Moderato
Allegro ironico
Lento
Molto vivo

Carolyn Kenneson, viola
Janet Scott, piano

INTERMISSION

BRANDENBURG CONCERTO, NO. 6 ..... J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro

Michael Bowie, Carolyn Kenneson, Neil Hughes
and Susanne Letourneau, violas
Claude Kenneson, violoncello
Marjorie Montjoy, bass
Robert Klakowich, harpsichord

Next concert in this series: Sunday, November 30 at 8:00 p.m.

PROGRAM NOTES

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, a pupil of Ildebrando Pizzetti, although born in Florence, at the age of 44 left his native Italy for Los Angeles where later died. His activities in the United States as a teacher and composer of film music did not impede a prodigious output of music; during his career he wrote operas, oratorieis, chamber music, choral works, and hundreds of songs and piano compositions. A chance meeting and subsequent friendship with Andrés Segovia also sparked the production of numerous pieces for the guitar, an important medium for the composer.

Romancero Gitano, written in 1951, but not premiered until 1967 in Tokyo, combines two of the composer's happiest media—chorus and guitar. The text for his "Gypsy Romance" is taken from the **Poema del Cante Jondo** by the eminent Spanish poet, Frederico García Lorca. The items selected from Lorca's **Poema** differ in character, but each song, set in madrigal style compatible with the guitar, has a brief prelude and postlude, both of which help to bind the disparate group into a cycle. Since the composer had visited Spain in 1913, his romance held certain extra-musical associations which are best summed up in his own words:

> Remembrances of what I saw came at every step . . . ; in the **Baladilla de los tres ríos,** the two twin rivers of Granada, the Dauro and the Genil shown, in contrast to the majestic Guadelquiver of Seville; in **Baile** the shadow of Carmen while she dances, seductive and sinister . . . ; and then, in the **Procesion** in which I joined three songs one after the other, **Procesión, Paso**, and **Saeta**—the souvenir of those strange religious processions, macabre and, at the same time gaudy . . . . And everywhere, this "sensation" of the "land of Spain" . . . the dry **castille**, the pale olive trees, the perfume of orange trees in Andalusia—and, along the coast, the sea which flaps the shore, with vibrations, almost . . . guitar-like!
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> P.H./B.G.

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The son of a Swiss clock merchant, Ernest Bloch, like his younger contemporary Castelnuovo-Tedesco, after extensive musical training in Europe, emigrated at the age of 37 to the United States where he spent most of his remaining years in Oregon. The **Suite for Viola and Piano** (or Orchestra), dedicated to Mrs. F. S. Coolidge, won first prize in the Berkshire Chamber Music Festival Competition at its debut in 1919, and subsequent performances of the work helped to establish an international reputation for the composer. The **Suite** is not overtly Hebrew as is the case with many of the other works in his prolific output, but nevertheless is quite romantic and exotic in conception.

In its published form, the piece bears no movement titles, but Bloch initially conceived programmatic labels for all of the movements, which are as follows: "In the Jungle," "Grotesque," "Nocturna," and "Land of the Sun (China)." The variety of melodic material and evanescent moods of the **Suite** Bloch bound together with cyclical themes which are especially evident in the last two movements. As a basis for his themes, he has drawn upon several scale systems, including the whole tone and pentatonic types. In his mixing of the exotic with concerned formal integration he here betrays two typical elements of his craftsmanship. As in most good programmatic works, the organic developmental procedures and structural balance render it quite unnecessary to be aware of any programmatic intent. The work stands on its own and remains one of Bloch's more important achievements.

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At the death (in 1734) of the Margrave of Brandenbury to whom Bach had dedicated his six concertos thirteen years earlier, the music collection of the aristocratic musical connoisseur was valued and sold. It is regrettable that Bach's sixth concerto at that time only fetched a sum of four Groschen, a sum which in our era of rapid inflation would not have been worth more than a dollar or two. Ironically, Bach probably lavished more care and attention on the Brandenburg concertos than most of his other compositions. The autograph score is immaculate; even the barlines are drawn with a ruler instead of being roughed in freehand as was usually the case. Such fastidiousness was perhaps to assuage the "fine and delicate" taste of the Margrave, which Bach was careful to extol in his typically obsequious dedication.

The six Brandenburg concertos, works of inestimable value, are on the borderline between chamber and orchestra music; three are of the concerto grosso type, and three (of which the sixth is one) have been designated "concerto-symphonies." The latter are reminiscent of the older Venetian canzona in their thematic treatment. The scoring of the sixth concerto (in the original two violas, two viole da gamba, cello and continuo), perhaps the most unusual in the set, differs markedly from its variegated predecessors in its deletion of the violin and wind instruments. Amongst the highlights of the work is the two-part canon (at the time span of only an eighth note) which initiates the opening ritornello, an example of intricate counterpoint in its strictest form. The nostalgic mysticism of the succeeding slow movement leads into the exhilarating final gigue which is marked by a busy dialogue for the top violas, with occasional interjections for the cello. Overall, Bach achieves a subtle balance between logic and experimentation in the last of his tributes to the taste of the Margrave.

B.G.